

Country of the Week: Lesotho

Lesotho is the southernmost landlocked country in the world with a uniquely cool climate due to its high altitude and mountain terrain.


In recent years, Lesotho's exports sector has transformed its economy; however, agriculture is still a valuable source of income for many Basotho, with nearly 50 percent of the population cultivating informal crops or raising livestock.

In addition to economic developments, investments in education continue to advance the nation, and Lesotho happily holds one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. As Lesotho continues to grow, you and other impressive members of the [Young African Leaders Initiative \(YALI\) Network](#) are shaping peaceful and positive change. Because of your dedication, Lesotho is the YALI Network #CountryoftheWeek!

Keep reading for three inspiring stories about breaking gender barriers, enhancing civic engagement, and leading community events throughout Lesotho.

Breaking gender barriers


In a male dominated industry, Relebohile Monethi boldly champions Lesotho's agricultural market.

Relebohile rears broilers and grows peppers as a female farmer and the owner of Morali'a Monethi Farms — an uncommon profession for a young woman in Lesotho. "I am a firm believer that any person, both male and female, so long as they continue to have the desire to learn, can succeed in the agricultural industry," she explains. 

Her positive demeanor and hopeful attitude is captured in an interview with [The Post Newspaper](#) in which she states that "[t]he most important step is to start, and the rest will fall into place along the way. Instead of procrastinating, wake up and do what you want to do." While growing her abilities as a farmer, she also refined her entrepreneurial skills, for which she credits the [YALI Network Online Courses](#) as a tremendously helpful resource. "One should not be afraid to be a risk-taker or to stand alone from the crowd in order to make it in life."

Relebohile's farm requires constant dedication — a trait she extends into all her endeavors — as she encourages other young women to follow their dreams. "I hope and plan to work closely with the ministry of education in Lesotho to impart [my] knowledge, skills, and passions ... to women and girls." She believes that farming is not only economically viable for her country as a whole, but also a rewarding and achievable profession for individuals, especially women.

Enhancing civic engagement


Lieketseng uses two YALI Network 
Online Courses to train Butha-Buthe
urban council youth.

Lieketseng Sakoane is a motivated woman living in #CountryoftheWeek Lesotho, who after completing the YALI Network Online Course [Understanding Elections And Civic Responsibility](#) became determined to engage her community in the election process.

As a snap election approached, Lieketseng found that the course content was “very relevant and necessary to ... Lesotho youth and all other citizens.” She notes that the course helped her spread awareness about how the election process functions, as well as one’s civic responsibility.

In addition to her civic duties, Lieketseng also refined her public speaking skills by studying YALI Network resources and acting on her own initiative. As a result of her hard work, she says her presentations were marvelous, and she earned a promotion at work. She has even been able to build her business skills with the resources she accesses from the YALI Network, and she makes sure to share her knowledge with the youth in her community.

Leading community events

Pontso joins local farmers, cultivating  relationships between suppliers and growers, while helping to harvest crops.

“I have realised how important it is to take cognisance of my surroundings and [the] people I live with; we are social beings and there is power in our unity,” says Pontso Tsoeunyane. “My dedication to my community has improved ever since I joined the YALI [N]etwork in 2015.”

Pontso currently lives in what she describes as a “vulnerable” village suffering from land erosion. “I have taken action as a leader to rehabilitate this land,” she states. “I’m currently working with the community, local authorities and the relevant ministries to control and reclaim this endangered land, while writing proposals to the relevant agencies for further support.”

As a local leader, Pontso believes that the “essence of inclusion,” especially in regards to young girls, is vital to creating future leaders who value and promote environmental and social rights. In addition, she works with over 30 projects across Lesotho, engaging diverse communities in ways to better society as a whole. “I volunteer with Youthworx on a self-enrichment camp for over 200 youth ... [helping equip them] with life skills, self development[,] and outdoor experiences. I’m also part of the GCG community that offers support to orphanages through friendly visits, counselling, [and] food packages.”

If you’re interested in getting involved in your community, like the [YALI Network Facebook page](#), and access free online trainings, virtual events, and more by visiting the [YALI Network website](#).
